



State of Nevada

Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

Division of Environmental Protection

NDEP.nv.gov

FACT SHEET – Managing Your Electronic Wastes

The growing demand for consumer electronic equipment and the marketing of new features has caused rapid growth in the generation of electronic waste, or e-waste. (Under the general heading of e-waste are included computer equipment, televisions, printers, fax machines, telephones, etc.) Carnegie Mellon University estimates 60 million PCs have already been buried in US landfills. The National Safety Council estimates 250 million computers will become obsolete between 2004 and 2009 (136,000 per day).

Americans discard around 100 million cell phones per year – and while many are reused, a significant number are disposed as trash (Smithsonian August, 2005). Proper management of this growing segment of the electronic wastestream is a challenge for business, government and the general public.

What are the concerns?

Rapid advances in technology and an expanding demand for new features accelerate the generation of electronic waste. Every year in Nevada hundreds of thousands of computers, monitors, copiers, fax machines, printers, televisions, and other electronic items become obsolete and if not reused or recycled end up in our landfills.

The concern is that certain components of electronic products contain hazardous materials. While circuit boards, batteries and switches may contain heavy metals, the significant component in the e-waste stream that typically is a hazardous waste is the cathode ray tube (CRT), the "picture tube" found in most TVs and computer monitors. CRTs contain significant quantities of lead, a heavy metal that could be released to the environment when the CRTs are crushed.

Electronics components and materials are resources that can be re-used or recycled. In order to conserve natural resources and the energy needed to produce new electronic equipment from virgin resources, electronic equipment should be refurbished, reused and recycled whenever possible.

In November 2005 the United States Government Accountability Office produced a [report](#), at the request of Congress, on the issue of electronic waste.

Reduction and Recycling:

Electronics Recycling refers to the inspection, disassembly, sorting, and processing of discarded electronic equipment for potential re-use or re-manufacture. In general, if you were to drop-off or send your old computer to an electronics recycler, they would first inspect the equipment noting the technology and functionality, and if it is determined to be no longer of value for re-use, would be broken down into its constituent parts; such as housings, circuit boards, wiring, and CRTs.

These would then undergo further processing into base materials for use as feedstock in manufacturing new goods or in some cases disposal. The State of Nevada does not certify or otherwise regulate electronic waste recyclers except for compliance with existing state and federal solid and hazardous waste regulations.

Disposal Regulations

CRTs are often hazardous when discarded because of the presence of lead. Whether they are regulated as hazardous waste or not depends on the source that generates them and where they are sent after they are retired. In addition, wastes designated as hazardous in their state of origin must also be managed as hazardous wastes when sent to Nevada.

Households: Used CRTs generated by households are not considered hazardous wastes and are not regulated under Nevada state or federal regulations, however local ordinances may be more stringent and prohibit disposal in municipal waste landfills.

Donation or Resale: CRTs that are used or reused are not considered hazardous waste.

Small Quantities Exempt: Used CRTs from a business or institution that generates less than 100 kg (about 220 lbs) of hazardous waste, including CRTs, per month are not regulated as hazardous waste under Nevada or federal regulations, however local ordinances may be more stringent and prohibit disposal in municipal waste landfills.

Large Quantities: CRTs disposed by facilities that generate more than 100 kg/month of hazardous waste are subject to hazardous waste regulations. CRTs sent for recycling from such facilities are also regulated. In June 2002 the US EPA issued a proposed rule to streamline and lessen the cost for recycling, but it is not yet clear what the final form of this rule will be. Contact the Nevada Small Business Development Center's Business Environmental Program at http://www.nsbdc.org/env_program/ or telephone 1-800-882-3233 for information on appropriate waste management options.

Contacts

For additional information, contact the NDEP Recycling Coordinator at (775) 687-9466 or visit the NDEP e-waste webpage at <http://ndep.nv.gov/ewaste/index.htm>

In Clark and Washoe Counties contact:

- [Southern Nevada Health District](#) at (702) 759-0600
- [Washoe County District Health Department](#) at (775) 328-2434